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## THE JEWISH TRAINING SCHOOL OF CHICAGO

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O. J. MILLIKEN

Principal

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Fifteen years ago the Russian Jews were coming to Chicago in large numbers, and to acquaint them in the shortest possible time with the English language, our American methods and American institutions, and to help them adjust themselves to the new order of things, the Jewish Training School of Chicago was established.

Centuries of persecution and restrictions in occupations had unfitted the newcomers to grapple with the strange conditions under which they were to live, and the school's curriculum was based entirely upon the necessary corrective tendencies, handwork becoming the central factor around which the other activities were grouped. For economic and religious reasons the new people naturally huddled together into what has become known as the "Ghetto," until they have built up a city within a city where, at the present time, if all buildings were removed, each person would have less than a square yard of earth upon which to stand.

During the last five years efforts in New York have resulted in scattering the emigrants over the whole United States; consequently there are not as many settling in any particular place. This has led the founders of this school to question whether its mission has not been fulfilled, and whether or not the public schools ought to care for the children who are receiving their education at private expense.

With these conditions before us, we have been gradually drifting into an industrial institution, selecting only those boys and girls who find it difficult to adjust themselves to public-school conditions and who do not take kindly to intellectual training alone. Every institution can point with



LATHE-WORK: MAKING A SHAFT FOR THE SHOP



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pride to its graduates, but the universal test must be sought in the masses who never reach the final goal—those whose economic circumstances compel them to become wage-earners before they arrive at any appreciable distance; and it sometimes appears as though we were doing but little for the large number of boys and girls, whose only diploma is a labor certificate.

We are placing before these children as many elementary trade activities as possible, in order to find out their bent, and then encourage and direct them along lines along which their natural abilities seem to trend. Carlyle says: "It is the first of all problems for a person to find out what kind of work he is able to do in this universe."

The school in its new mission is only in its infancy, but we see great possibilities, and, with a lengthened course covering two years of apprenticeship in trades, we hope to redeem many a drifting individual, and turn him into an active channel, where he can determine a direct purpose in life.

The academic work is to be made as practical as possible and brought in touch with the handwork. In fact, President Eliot, of Harvard, gave our creed in these words: "One-half of the education of a child should be manual education. Young people learn by doing. The soul-centers of many a young man can be reached only by having him work with his hands. I constantly see the fallacy of abstract theory in education."

A growing boy likes to do what a man does, in a man's way and with a man's aim. He soon tires working with toy tools or making useless things. He is utilitarian from the start, and usually is able to tell just what he wants. When he constructs an article, he has in mind one of three uses: for his play, for his home or school, or for profit; and it is a poor teacher who cannot direct a boy's interest so as to conform to the ability of the boy at the limitations of the shop. How often we squeeze all of the juice out of a boy's mechanical conception by following the pedagogue's

law, as laid down by many manual-training teachers, that nothing shall be attempted until a working-drawing is made!

It is often better to allow him to make an article and then draw it. There are but few untrained adults who can read a drawing, and to compel a child to go through a formal imitation of meaningless lines at the time of an aroused interest is cruel and harmful. It will not be long, however, before a boy can be led to discover for himself that, in order to economize in time and material, he must first make a working drawing. The incentive is produced, and mechanical drawing ceases to be a meaningless drudgery.

There is a species of boy that we never turn from our doors, if we can possibly find room for him, and that is the one Ernest Thompson-Seton had in mind when, upon being asked what wild animal he liked best, he replied: "A wild boy." When he first enters the school, we enroll him in the shop, not allowing him to do any book-work until he asks for it; but we direct our efforts toward putting him in touch with something that will display his weaknesses in academic work, and it is not long before he asks permission to take the particular work in which he is found deficient, and this usually starts with arithmetic. We now have over sixty pupils of that kind, and, with two exceptions, at their own request, all are taking our full course in academic work. We feel that we have accomplished a considerable amount when we have supplied the incentive.

A course of work has not been so completely mapped out for our girls, but we are seeking to connect them with the domestic and commercial worlds. Much more attention has been given to boys than to girls, and the field is much newer, and not fraught with so many opportunities; but there is no question but what the needs are as great, and possibly greater. Within a year we hope to be able to give practical results from our work with the girls.